

ROCKLIN PARKS COMMEMORATE THE PAST

By: Peter Hill, Mayor City of Rocklin

If you are like a majority of the residents in the City of Rocklin, you've spent time enjoying the more than 400 acres that make up our park system. Whether it's attending the Rocklin Jubilee at Johnson-Springview Park, meeting friends for a barbecue at Clarke Dominguez Park or taking the kids to the playgrounds at Ruhkala Park, do you ever wonder how some of the parks got their names?

Fourteen city parks, eight of which are in the planning stage, commemorate pioneer families and community leaders who worked tirelessly to make the city the strong, family-oriented community that it is today. The names were picked by the Park Names Committee that was established by the Rocklin City Council. The committee researched the city's history and took suggestions from residents and old timers to find remarkable individuals and families who made a difference in the community.

Johnson-Springview Community Park is named in honor of the Johnson family, whose family members are still active volunteers. Margaret Azevedo Community Park is named after the long-time park commissioner, who devoted more than 25 years of her life to public service and championed the construction of many of Rocklin's existing parks.

Four neighborhood parks, Clarke Dominguez Park, Joe Hernandez Park, Ruhkala Park and Sasaki Park, are also named for important Rocklin families and individuals. Clarke Dominguez, known as "Mr. Rocklin" by many in the community, was a dedicated member of the Rocklin City Council and served as the city's mayor numerous times. Another notable resident, Joe Hernandez, was the embodiment of community service and commitment. He served for more than 18 years on local school boards and as a volunteer firefighter for the City of Rocklin. Members of the Ruhkala family founded the Rocklin Historical Society and also helped start an event that residents and families still enjoy today; the Rocklin Jubilee. The Sasaki family farmed the land in Rocklin for more than five decades, and volunteered at countless community events.

Eight neighborhood parks currently in the planning stages are also named after residents that were important to Rocklin's past. They include Bolton Park, Willard Park, Pernu Park, Wickman Park, Brigham-Hawes Park, Whitney Park, Corral-Alva Park and Gayaldo Park.

James Bolton was a Rocklin pioneer who designed the original town site. The Willard family has lived in Rocklin since 1886 and family members have acted as the town constable and the Placer County Game Warden. Adolph Pernu was one of the most important quarry owners during the heyday of Rocklin granite quarrying and built what is now Rocklin City Hall. The Wickman family was also an important part of the early quarrying days, owning and operating a number of granite quarries in the city. Charles Brigham and Elisha Hawes opened the first granite quarry in Rocklin and in 1859 Elisha's nephew was the first child to be born in the city.

Joel Parker Whitney owned nearly 27,000 acres in Rocklin, Lincoln and Roseville. Much of his property was located in what is now Stanford Ranch, Whitney Ranch and Whitney Oaks developments. The well-known Corral and Alva families came to Rocklin in the early 1900's from Spain. The Corral-Alva Park will be built on what was the original 1922 Alva family ranch house. Last but not least, the Gayaldo family was active in shaping the development of Rocklin since the turn of the century and built buildings and operated businesses on Pacific Street. Many of these families still have members living and volunteering in Rocklin today.

As Rocklin continues to move forward as a family community where residents can live, work and play, it is important to look back and honor the city's rich heritage and past. All of those recognized in park names have been champions of the City of Rocklin. Present and future residents will benefit from their actions and passions.

The next time you swing on the swings at Ruhkala Park or enjoy a picnic at Sasaki Park, take a moment to find the granite boulder with the bronze plaque and read the history behind the park name. It is important to remember the generations before us that made Rocklin what it is today.

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